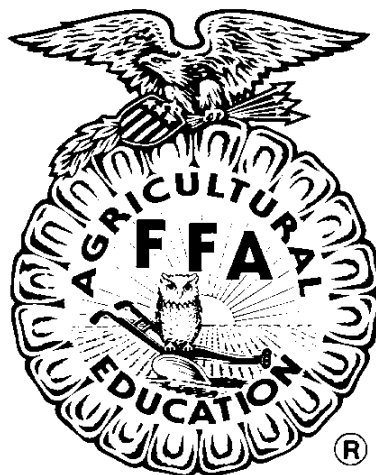


# **A Guide to Developing Effective Leadership and Preparing Candidates for State Office**



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# **A GUIDE TO PREPARING CANDIDATES FOR STATE FFA OFFICE**

**Interview questions will be taken from this booklet. State officers will need to know this information to serve the New Jersey State FFA Association effectively.**

**(Sources for answers are italicized and in parentheses)**

## **1. THE ROLE OF FFA IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**

In 1950, the 81st Congress of the United States, recognizing the importance of the FFA as an integral part of the program of vocational agriculture, granted a Federal Charter to the FFA. In 1998, the 105th Congress of the United States reviewed and passed technical amendments. This shows through the revisions as Public Law 105-225. *Public Law 105-225 is a revision of Public Law 81-740 which reflects technical changes.*

**The FFA organization is one of three components of agricultural education.** FFA is a tool to help teachers teach and students learn about agricultural education. It motivates students to excel in the classroom and in their supervised agricultural experience. Thus, **the three components of an agricultural education program are classroom/laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience and FFA.**

The FFA provides students with dynamic ways to learn about agriculture and leadership, as well as opportunities for self-improvement. Just as an agriculture teacher uses a classroom or laboratory to teach hydroponics or agricultural mechanics, he or she also uses the FFA to teach leadership and motivate students to set high goals and work to achieve those goals. With this comes satisfaction and recognition for a job well done. The FFA is integral to the instruction having its origin and roots as a definite part of the high school curriculum in agricultural education. An outstanding FFA chapter, under the *guidance of an advisor (agricultural instructor)* and a challenging program of activities, enriches the instruction in agriculture.

### **FFA Mission Statement:**

***FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.***

1. Values of the FFA to its members:
  - A. FFA creates interest in agriculture.
  - B. Students learn to be leaders.
  - C. Members are helped to find themselves and develop confidence.
  - D. FFA provides group activities in which members develop tolerance, understanding and learn to work together.

- E. Members develop initiative and learn to accept responsibility.
- F. Students may plan and work on activities they like and that are of value to them in a strong school organization that has high prestige.
- G. It provides an opportunity for students to learn to express themselves and take part in public speaking.
- H. Members learn to buy and sell cooperatively, finance their activities and practice thrift
- I. FFA planned activities provide for recognition of achievement.
- J. The members' interest in improving their school and community is increased, resulting in pride and better citizenship.

## **II. FUNDAMENTALS TO KNOW ABOUT AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**

**Your effectiveness as a State Officer will be enhanced by knowing the following:**

*(The italicized information references where this information can be found.)*

1. What are the three components of agricultural education?  
*(Student Handbook, Official Manual, SAE Handbook)*
  - a. Classroom Instruction
  - b. Supervised Agricultural Education
    1. entrepreneurship
    2. placement
    3. exploratory
    4. research/experimental & analysis
  - c. FFA Organization
2. How do the three components of agricultural education work together to form a well-rounded, strong program?  
*(Student Handbook, Official Manual, SAE Handbook)*
3. How many Agricultural Education programs are in New Jersey?  
*(NJ FFA/Ag Ed Program Directory)*

## **III. FUNDAMENTALS TO KNOW ABOUT THE FFA**

**Your effectiveness as a State Officer will be enhanced by knowing the following:**

1. How does involvement in the FFA organization enhance a student's agricultural education?  
*(Student Handbook, Official Manual)*
2. Why was the FFA organized?  
*(Student Handbook, Official Manual)*
3. What are the building stones of the FFA? How do they contribute to the development of young people as agriculturists, good citizens and leaders in their communities?  
*(Student Handbook, Official Manual)*

4. What are some unique features of the FFA?  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual*)
  
5. What are the main values of the FFA to?  
 A. The community      E. Internationally  
 B. The home              F. The advisor  
 C. The school            G. The member  
 D. Our nation            H. To each member  
 (*Student Handbook, Official Manual*)
  
6. As you look back over your experiences in the FFA, why did you join the organization and what has it meant to you?
  
7. If a supporter of the FFA, who is also a supporter of the 4-H asks you, “What is the difference between the FFA and the 4-H?” how would you respond?  
(*FFA and 4-H Brochure*)
  
8. Relative to the administration of the FFA, know the following:  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual, NJ FFA/Ag Ed Programs Directory*)
  - A. What and who is the State FFA Executive Board?
  - B. What and who is the State FFA Specialist and Program Leader for Agricultural Education/State FFA Advisor?
  
9. What is the relationship of the State Executive Board to?
  - A. State staff
  - B. State Advisor and State FFA Specialist
  - C. The state association
  - D. Chapter officers
  
10. What are the specific duties of a state FFA officer?  
(*NJ State FFA Officer Application*)
  
11. Referring to the Official FFA Manual what are your responsibilities to:
  - A. Groups or persons in the state FFA association?
  - B. Groups or persons in the local FFA chapter?
  
12. With reference to the major agricultural organizations:
  - A. Be familiar with several organizations such as:
    - \* NJ Farm Bureau ([www.fb.com/njfb](http://www.fb.com/njfb))
    - \* NJ State Board of Agriculture ([www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sboa.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sboa.htm))
    - \* NJ Department of Agriculture ([www.state.nj.us/agriculture/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/index.html))
  - B. Be clear on the work each organization does for youth.
  
13. It is essential that you have a good understanding of or know the following:  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual, www.ffa.org*)

- A. The history of the FFA.
  - B. The purposes of the FFA.
  - C. How the organization operates.
  - D. A program of activities and how it is developed.
  - E. The essentials of good officer training on the local and state levels.
  - F. Leadership training programs.
  - G. All ceremonies for FFA meetings and degrees.
  - H. The National FFA Center, FFA Supply Services, FFA New Horizons Magazine.
  - I. Parliamentary Procedure.
  - J. National FFA Week and other public relations programs.
  - K. FFA Mission Statement.
  - L. FFA Emblem.
14. How is the FFA financed?
- A. Membership dues
  - B. New Jersey Department of Agriculture
  - C. New Jersey Department of Education
  - D. New Jersey FFA Foundation
  - E. New Jersey FFA Alumni Association
15. What are good guidelines for planning and conducting a program of activities?  
(*Chapter Planning and Recognition Handbook*)
16. What is the cost of FFA dues and what benefits do members get with their dues paid?  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual*)
17. What international opportunities are available to FFA members?  
(*www.ffa.org, Official Manual*)

#### **IV. FUNDAMENTALS TO KNOW ABOUT THE STATE AND NATIONAL FFA FOUNDATION, INC.**

The State/National FFA Foundation greatly benefits FFA members. Your knowledge of the following is essential:

(*Student Handbook, Official Manual, www.ffa.org*)

- 1. When was the National FFA Foundation, Inc. organized?**
- 2. What are the purposes of the Foundation?**
- 3. How is the State Foundation administered?**
- 4. How is the State Foundation financed?**
- 5. The publications below are sponsored by the National FFA Foundation. Who do these publications serve?**
  - A. FFA Advisors . . . Making a Difference (*Advisors*)

- B. Convention Proceedings (*Advisors, FFA Members, State Staff, etc.*)
  - C. The FFA New Horizons (*Students, Advisors, Alumni Members, etc.*)
  - D. Alumni Newsletter (*Alumni Members*)
  - E. Student Handbook (*Students, Advisors*)
  - F. Advisors' Handbook (*Advisors*)
  - G. Reporters' Handbook (*Chapter Officers*)
  - H. Advisors' Public Relations Guide (*Advisors, Chapter Officers*)
  - I. State Officer Handbook (*State FFA Officers*)
6. What are the National FFA Foundation-funded programs that recognize outstanding Agriscience activities for teachers and for students?  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual*)
- A. Agriscience Student of the Year
  - B. Agriscience Teacher of the Year
7. The National FFA Foundation funds National FFA Career Development Events and awards.  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual, Career Development Event Bulletin*)
- A. How do these events relate to local instruction in agriculture?
  - B. How do these events differ from proficiency awards programs?
  - C. What do career development events test?
  - D. What is done to keep these events current with new procedures and standards in the industry?
8. The National Proficiency Awards Program recognizes individuals in most agriculture/agribusiness areas.  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual, Proficiency Handbook, Career Development Event Bulletin*)
- A. How should proficiency awards relate to Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs?
  - B. How do proficiency awards differ from Career Development Events in what's measured or tested?
  - C. Can a student win more than one proficiency award at the national level?
  - D. How do the proficiency awards program relate to the American FFA Degree Program?
  - E. How can this program be used in local recruitment efforts?
9. Answer the following questions on the chapter award program:  
(*Student Handbook, Official Manual*)
- National Chapter
- A. What is the purpose of this award program?
  - B. What types of awards are presented?
  - C. How are the national winners selected for each award?

10. If you are asked to present Foundation awards at a State Convention, what important points should you emphasize in your remarks?
11. If you had three minutes to explain the importance of FFA to a corporate president, what would you say?

## **V. FUNDAMENTALS TO KNOW ABOUT THE FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

The FFA Alumni Association consists of former members and others interested in supporting the agricultural education program/FFA.

*(Student Handbook, Official Manual, [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org), FFA Alumni Manual)*

- A. When was the National FFA Alumni Association chartered? State Alumni?
- B. Why was the FFA Alumni organized?
- C. How is the Alumni financed?
- D. What is a life membership?
- E. Where would an FFA member find information on the FFA Alumni?
- F. What are some major National Alumni activities?
  1. Scholarships to the Washington Leadership Conference
  2. Sponsorship of workshops during the National Convention
- G. What are possible state and local activities?
- H. What are the Alumni events and awards program?
  1. Outstanding Affiliate Award
  2. Outstanding Achievement Award (recognition of Alumni members)
  3. Legion of Merit Award (membership promotion award)
  4. Scrapbook Award
- I. How do you organize or charter a local affiliate?
- J. Does a member of a local FFA Alumni Affiliate have to be a member of the State and National FFA Alumni Association?
- K. Who can be an alumni member and what can they do for the FFA?

## **VI. QUESTIONS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER WHILE SERVING AS AN OFFICER**

1. How have you benefitted from serving the organization as an officer?
2. What is the difference between the FFA and 4-H?

3. A student's parents do not want their son/daughter to enroll in agricultural education. What advice do you give?
4. What should an officer or member do when they see an FFA member smoking in public while wearing the FFA jacket? When the jacket is improperly worn?
5. What should you do after receiving an award from the Foundation?
6. How do chapter members utilize all the opportunities provided by the FFA?
7. What kind of training did you receive as a chapter officer?
8. How do you prepare your speeches? Where do you get your ideas?
9. What do chapters do that have the most successful chapter banquets?
10. A member has just been defeated in running for chapter office, what advice do you give them?
11. How can chapter officers be positively encouraged to learn their parts for FFA ceremonies?

## **VII. REFERENCES**

1. Internet
  - A. NJ FFA Home Page: [http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/rural/ag\\_education.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/rural/ag_education.htm)
  - B. National FFA Home Page: [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)
  - C. NJ Farm Bureau Home Page: [www.fb.com/njfb](http://www.fb.com/njfb)
  - D. NJ Department of Agriculture Home Page: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/>
  - E. NJ State Board of Agriculture Home Page: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sboa/sboa.htm>
2. Official FFA Manual
3. FFA Student Handbook
4. Proficiency Award Handbook
5. FFA Alumni Manual
6. NJ Agricultural Education/FFA Directory
7. FFA and 4-H Brochure
8. NJ FFA Officer Application
9. NJ Agricultural Fact Sheets
10. Career Development Event Bulletin
11. SAE Handbook
12. Chapter Planning and Recognition Handbook
13. Food for America Handbook

## **VIII. STATE FFA OFFICER SELECTION AND ELECTION PROCESS**

1. The process is divided into three parts:

Part I.	Interviews five @ 100 points each	= 500 points
Part II.	Written Exam (50 Questions)	= 100 points
Part III.	Written Letter	= 100 points
		Total Possible = 700 points
2. Interviews:
  - Round 1 - Personal Interview
  - Round 2 - Agriculture in the World Today
  - Round 3 - Educational Issues: Education, Agricultural Education, FFA, Vocational Education and Supervised Agricultural Experience
  - Round 4 - Public Speaking
  - Round 5 - Involvement in and Conducting FFA Activities.
3. Written Exam: Exam material will be taken from materials in this study guide and any supplemental pages provided.
4. Written Letter: Letters may be a thank you letter, invitation or a letter of information.
5. State Officer Evaluations will be reviewed by the Nominating Committee for any state officers rerunning for a second term.
6. Election of the new state officers by the NJ FFA state convention delegates at the 5th session.
7. Installation Ceremony.

## **IX. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF EACH ROUND OF INTERVIEWS**

### **Round 1 - Personal Interview**

The purpose of Round 1 is to permit a free ranging conversation on topics of mutual interest between each candidate and each committee member. When the round is finished, each candidate will have had a personal, private talk with each committee member. The committee member should be in the best position to begin this conversation, because they have read the background material on each candidate. This format of questions asked by the committee member is to be used to start a conversation (this is not an interrogation of the candidate). Share experiences with each other and enjoy the conversation.

Committee members will inquire to identify the candidate's SAE knowledge and experiences. Committee members should come away from each conversation with an impression of the candidate as an individual. This impression should then evolve as it is modified by candidates performance in the remaining Rounds of Interviews and appearances before the committee. Committee members should use Score Card A to evaluate each candidate following the conversation.

### **Round 2 - Agriculture in the World Today**

State FFA Officers are the foremost representatives of New Jersey's agricultural education youth in the state. No other high school or college student is expected to know more about the current state of the industry as a whole, problems, successes, importance to the state, the country and the world, and the direction for the future. State officers must bring with them into office a basic core of agricultural knowledge and an awareness of current agricultural issues.

The committee will interview each candidate to gauge the extent of the candidate's awareness and understanding of current agricultural issues. These may be related to current state agricultural topics, related to foreign trade, animal rights and so forth. A state officer must have the basic understanding of the fundamental questions or points of view which make up the major issues in agriculture today. Committee members will use Score Card B to evaluate each candidate's performance.

### **Round 3 - Educational Issues: Education, Agricultural Education, FFA, Vocational Education and Supervised Agricultural Experience**

State FFA Officers represent the organization to leaders at all levels. It is important they understand the purpose of vocational education that they know the structure of agricultural education at the state and federal levels and that they understand the role of FFA in preparing a student for a career in agriculture. State FFA Officers need to have a sound understanding of what constitutes a quality, successful local agricultural education program using the Local Program Success model. It is important that a state officer can communicate the purpose of supervised agricultural experience programs and stimulate new FFA members to begin laying the foundation for a meaningful SAE program of their own, which someday gives them a chance for awards, degrees and recognition in FFA and for a satisfying occupation in the industry after FFA. Committee members will use questions and other methods to measure the candidates understanding of this system and their ability to explain it. Committee members will use Score Card B to evaluate each candidate's performance.

### **Round 4 - Public Speaking**

State officers are expected to be able to speak in front of others. A state officer will be asked to give many speeches throughout a year of service. It is important for a state officer to be able to think on their feet to deliver a speech. In this round candidates will be given a topic then asked to speak on the topic in front of the nominating committee. The committee will be looking for organization of thoughts, presentation and overall effect of the speech. The committee will use Score Card B to evaluate the candidates.

### **Round 5 - Involvement in and Conducting FFA Activities**

This topic is the heart of what State FFA Officers do. Officers must be familiar with every FFA program, awards and degrees available for either chapter or individual participation. Chapter members depend on State Officers to be able to answer their questions about FFA activities and to show them how to participate more fully in these programs. Officers must also know how to organize group activities for members at COLT, classroom visits, state convention and so forth.

This round is intended to let the committee members evaluate the candidate's knowledge of FFA activities and their abilities to work with other candidates in organizing hypothetical group activities for FFA members and officers. Committee members will use Score Card C to evaluate the candidate's performance.

## **X. WRITTEN EXAM AND LETTER WRITING**

### **Written Exam**

The written exam portion of the State Officers' selection process designed to measure the candidate's knowledge of FFA and related topics.

The categories that will be presented on the test are:

- A. The FFA mission, the Agricultural Education Mission, programs, structure and history.
- B. FFA Foundation and FFA Alumni.
- C. State Officers' role in FFA.
- D. Agriculture and education issues.
- E. Leadership, personal development and agricultural careers.
- F. FFA history, programs and structure.

### **Written Letter**

This portion is used to help evaluate the candidate's ability to express their thoughts on paper. This will be conducted by the candidate writing a thank you letter, an invitation or just general information related to a specific topic.

## **XI. SCORE CARDS**

### **Round I**

### **“Personal Interview”**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
Ease during interview – attitude, poise, personality, appearance, self-confidence and posture (20)	
Clarity of thinking – fluency, emphasis, conciseness and structure of answer (20)	
Power of expression – forcefulness, pronunciation, English and grammar usage (20)	
Candidate's knowledge and experience (20)	
Appropriateness of response (10)	
General effect – extent to which candidate was understandable and convincing (10)	
TOTAL (100)	

## Round II

### “Public Speaking”

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points
Content Related to Topic – appropriateness of content, accuracy of statement, suitability of material used (35)	
Power of Expression - forcefulness, pronunciation, English and grammar usage (25)	
Voice – quality, pitch, articulation (20)	
Stage Presence – personal appearance, poise and body posture, confidence and personality (10)	
General Effect – understandable, convincing, pleasing and held attention (10)	
TOTAL (100)	

## Round III

### “Involvement and Conducting a Group Activity”

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points
Appropriateness of individual's remarks - (25)	
Creativity and originality (25)	
Contribution to group effort (20)	
Courtesy and cooperation (20)	
General effect (10)	
TOTAL (100)	

## Round IV

### “Agriculture in the World Today”

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points
Ease during interview – attitude, poise, personality, appearance, self-confidence and posture (20)	
Clarity of thinking – fluency, emphasis, conciseness and structure of answer (20)	
Power of expression – forcefulness, pronunciation, English and grammar usage (20)	
Candidate’s knowledge and experience (20)	
Appropriateness of response (10)	
General effect – extent to which candidate was understandable and convincing (10)	
TOTAL (100)	

## Round V

### “Ag Ed, FFA, SAE, Personal, etc.”

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points
Ease during interview – attitude, poise, personality, appearance, self-confidence and posture (20)	
Clarity of thinking – fluency, emphasis, conciseness and structure of answer (20)	
Power of expression – forcefulness, pronunciation, English and grammar usage (20)	
Candidate’s knowledge and experience (20)	
Appropriateness of response (10)	
General effect – extent to which candidate was understandable and convincing (10)	
TOTAL (100)	

## Letter Writing

Candidate\_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points
Content - Does letter address the issue? (20 pts)	
Does letter include an FFA key message (10 pts)	
Does letter have a professional tone w/ strong vocabulary (10 pts)	
Does letter address the subject in a simplistic manner (10 pts)	
Grammar - Spelling, sentence structure, and proper use of English language. 5pts off /error (30pts)	
Letter Structure - Salutation, Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and Signature at the end (20pts)	
TOTAL (100)	

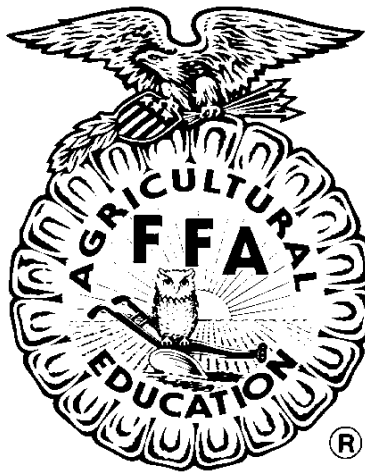
## New Jersey Agricultural Facts

- The \$62.5 billion food and agriculture complex is one of New Jersey's largest industries, ranking after pharmaceuticals and tourism in the economic benefits it brings to the state.
- In 2001, the state's 9,600 farms generated cash receipts totaling \$821 million.
- The nursery, greenhouse and sod industry remains the leading commodity group.
- Productive farmland covers 830,000 acres, about 20% of New Jersey's land area.
- New Jersey's farms are family-owned and operated with an average farm size of 86 acres.
- The Garden State produces more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables (fresh and processed).
- New Jersey is one of the top ten producers of cranberries, blueberries, peaches, asparagus, bell peppers, spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, sweet corn, tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, escarole/endive and eggplants.
- New Jersey's equine industry adds another dimension to agriculture, producing fine racehorses, as well as horses for recreational riding and competitive exhibition.
- Fish and seafood is also a valuable commodity with tons of bluefish, tilefish, flounder, hake, shellfish, and other species harvested annually.
- The commercial fishing industry adds about \$100 million to the value of agriculture in New Jersey.
- Farmland preservation is the key ingredient in the formula to retain irreplaceable farmland. The State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) administers the state's Farmland Preservation Program. The SADC is in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Begun in 1983 and now considered a national model, the program has been instrumental in the permanent preservation of more than 100,000 acres of farmland.
- The New Jersey dairy industry is an important segment of the state's agricultural economy, which supplies almost one-fifth of the fluid milk and dairy products used by over 7.5 million residents in the state.
- The Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program is a voluntary program that helps Garden State farmers increase the sales of more than 80 New Jersey commodities.
- The Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Rearing Laboratory is designed to allow state entomologists to develop insect rearing techniques and mass produce beneficial insects to be used to help reduce insect and weed populations below economic levels.

*Information compiled from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture website [www.state.nj.us/agriculture/](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/)*

## **NEW JERSEY'S DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION:**

Agricultural Education prepares people for careers and professional leadership in production, processing, marketing and distribution of agricultural products and for related careers in plant and animal technology (including aquatic life), economics, education, mechanics and engineering, natural resources, and environmental technology, politics, sociology and international relations and trade.



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